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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER AND AF/SE NATSIOS, NSC FOR
PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SU](#) [CG](#) [UG](#)

SUBJECT: SUDAN/UGANDA/DRC: LRA PEACE TALKS SEEM LIKELY TO
RESUME

REF: KHARTOUM 351

Classified By: Pol/Econ Nathan Holt, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

11. (C) Former Mozambique President Joaquim Chissano met leadership of the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on the Sudan/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) border March 11 and secured an apparent agreement that the LRA will return to peace talks once various LRA concerns are addressed. LRA conditions for re-starting the stalled talks include a beefed up mediation team, enhanced per diem for LRA negotiators and better security in Juba. A Ugandan minister who attended the meeting said the LRA conditions for returning to the talks are "trivial" and said LRA chief Joseph Kony told him personally that talks would resume in "two weeks." Kony also assured the delegation, which included Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) Vice President Riek Machar, that he is "tired" of life in the bush and committed to peace. Chissano scolded the LRA for lack of seriousness, and LRA representatives excoriated Machar for alleged bias in his role as mediator. End Summary.

Stern Message from Chissano

12. (C) Chissano, the UN's special envoy for the LRA problem, traveled by helicopter to Ri-Kwangba on the Sudan/DRC border March 11 for his second meeting with LRA leadership in two weeks. In addition to GOSS VP Machar, Chissano was accompanied by Government of Uganda (GOU) Minister of Interior Ruhakana Rugunda and ten members of the LRA's externally-based negotiating team. Chissano's group was forced to wait five hours at the meeting site before LRA second-in-command Vincent Otti arrived. Otti initially told the group that because of security concerns there would be no meeting with LRA chief Joseph Kony. After further dialogue and what one meeting participant called a "dramatic" exercise by LRA personnel to sweep and secure the area, Kony emerged from the bush. The elusive LRA leader met for about two hours with Chissano and the rest of the group. Participants said it was Rugunda's first ever meeting with Kony and that Rugunda told Kony that the GOU wanted him to "come home."

13. (C) The meeting was dominated by a lengthy recapitulation by the LRA negotiating team of complaints about mediator Machar, financial and logistical arrangements for the stalled peace talks, and the physical security of LRA negotiators. Chissano was "very firm" with the LRA leadership that the rebels needed to be more serious and demonstrate their commitment to talks, according to Ugandan deputy foreign

affairs minister Henry Oryem Okello. Juba-based UNMIS Coordinator Peter Schumann, also present, confirmed that Chissano delivered a tough and stern message. The mediators and the international community had invested enormous amounts of time and money in this process, Chissano reportedly said, and would not continue if the LRA did not take the process seriously. Machar said nothing.

Kony Says He is for Peace, and Ready for Talks

14. (C) Kony's response was to reiterate several times that he supports peace and peace talks, according to meeting participants. Kony said he is "tired" and wants to come out of the bush, according to Ugandan deputy Minister Okello. Okello said Kony "personally" assured him that peace talks would resume in "two weeks." UNMIS head Schumann also confirmed that Kony endorsed a resumption of peace talks, pending resolution of LRA complaints. GOSS member of parliament Tulio Odongi, co-chair of the talks secretariat and a participant in the Ri-Kwangba meeting, told PolOff that GOSS expects the LRA negotiating team to return to Juba March 21 and talks to resume March 23. However, Odongi added, this is "not confirmed." The LRA negotiating team departed Juba March 12.

Acholi Leaders Meet Separately With LRA Leadership

15. (C) Several ethnic Acholi leaders, including senior chief David Acana II, remained in Ri-Kwangba after Chissano and his contingent departed. The Acholi notables then met separately

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with LRA leadership. Details of their meeting were not immediately available in Juba. Acana convened a conference of Ugandan and Sudanese Acholi leaders in Juba last week that called for peace talks to resume immediately (reftel).

Cessation of Hostilities

16. (C) Because of delays in getting started and the lengthy discussion of LRA complaints about the peace process, the parties in Ri-Kwangba did not formally take up the second item on the agenda, a proposed renewal of the lapsed Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA). Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) Maj. Gen. Wilson Deng, however, said the LRA did reiterate that they would abide by the CHA unless attacked. Deng noted that despite these assurances, the LRA carried out several attacks in southern Sudan both before and after the agreement lapsed at the end of February. According to an UNMIS military official, LRA representatives at the Ri-Kwangba meeting blamed some of these attacks on the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF). Pressed specifically to account for the death of an Indian UNMIS peacekeeper in southern Sudan on January 26, LRA commander Vincent Otti reportedly said the LRA has no details of the incident.
HUME